

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

SECDEF WASHDC

USCOSO AFNORTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 2217

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

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TAGS: PFOR, MARR, NO, NATO

SUBJECT: NEW HIGH LEVEL DEFENSE COMMISSION NAMED

REF: OSLO A-48 MARCH 13, 1974

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AT LAST REACHED AGREEMENT ON COMPOSITION OF LONG-PROMISED DEFENSE COMMISSION AND HAS GIVEN IT A BROAD MANDATE TO REVIEW THE PURPOSE, ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE NORWEGIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. THE MANDATE AS APPROVED BY THE CABINET MAY 31 DOES NOT CHARGE THE COMMISSION WITH QUESTIONING THE CORNERSTONE OF NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY, NATO MEMBERSHIP, ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER BELIEVE DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE IN COURSE OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK INEVITABLE (AND, IN FACT, DESIREABLE). LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP LEADER ODVAR NORDLI WILL CHAIR THE COMMISSION AND SECRETARY GENERAL OF MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, ERIK HIMLE, WAS NAMED TO HEAD COMMISSION SECRETARIAT. BOTH MEN ARE STAUNCH SUPPORTERS OF NATO MEMBERSHIP AND A CREDIBLE NORWEGIAN DEFENSE POSTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THE COMPOSITION OF THE PRESTIGIOUS, LONG-HERALDED DEFENSE COMMISSION WHICH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREPARATION OF A BROAD ASSESSMENT OF THE NORWEGIAN MILITARY, INCLUDING AN ANALYSIS OF MAJOR ALTERNATIVES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARMED FORCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE DEFENSE PROGRAM VALID THROUGH THE 1980'S. THE THIRTEEN-MEMBER COMMISSION HAS BEEN DRAWN FROM A REPRESENTATIVE CROSS SECTION OF NORWEGIAN LIFE COMPOSED OF ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE STORTING (PARLIAMENT), MILITARY OFFICERS AND DEFENSE EXPERTS, PROMINENT CIVILIANS AND TWO KNOWN LEFT-LEANING OPPONENTS OF NORWAY'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. THE CHAIRMAN IS ODVAR NORDLI, MEMBER OF THE STORTING AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUP LEADER FOR THE LABOR PARTY. ALTHOUGH NOT FORMALLY ANNOUNCED, DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL HAS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT ERIK HIMLE, THE HIGHLY CAPABLE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND FORMER MINISTER OF BOTH COMMERCE AND COMMUNICATIONS, HAS BEEN TAPPED TO HEAD THE COMMISSION'S SECRETARIAT. THE DEFENSE COMMISSION IS EXPECTED TO SUBMIT ITS FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE END OF 1975.

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION: NINE OF THE MEMBERS WERE NAMED ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RECOMMENDATION OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE STORTING AND FOUR MEMBERS, IN ADDITION TO THE HEAD OF THE SECRETARIAT, COME FROM THE DEFENSE COMMUNITY ITSELF. ONE MEMBER OF THE NORWEGIAN FOREIGN SERVICE, A FORMER UNDERSECRETARY IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WAS NAMED TO THE COMMISSION. FROM OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT, THE COMMISSION INCLUDES A BANKER WHO HAS SERVED FORMERLY AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE (ANOTHER EX-DEFENSE MINISTER IS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER), A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE

FOR FOREIGN POLICY, THE CHIEF OF THE OSLO POLICE ACADEMY, AND A JOURNALIST. THREE COMMISSION MEMBERS HOLD SEATS IN THE STORTING. BROKEN DOWN BY POLITICAL AFFILIATION, THE COMMISSION HAS FOUR MEMBERS OF RULLNG LABOR PARTY (ONE OF WHOM COMES FROM THE PARTY'S ANTI-NATO LEFT WING YOUTH ORGANIZATION), FOUR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAJOR NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES (TWO CONSERVATIVES AND ONE EACH FROM THE CENTER PARTY AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY) AND ONE MEMBER OF THE ANTI-NATO SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LEAGUE (SV).

3. MANDATE: THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH THE PREPARATION OF A SWEEPING, LONG-RANGE ANALYSIS OF THE PURPOSE, ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE NORWEGIAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT. THE MANDATE SPECIFICALLY ENJOINS THE COMMISSION TO EVALUATE THE PLACE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES AS AN ELEMENT OF NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY. ON THE BASIS OF THE TASKS THE COMMISSION BELIEVES MUST BE GIVEN THE ARMED FORCES (AND SPECIAL ATTENTION IS CALLED TO DEFENSE OF THE NEWLY-DISCOVERED OIL RESOURCES ON NORWAY'S EXTENSIVE CONTINENTAL SHELF), IT IS TO EVALUATE THE MAIN ALTERNATIVES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARMED FORCES ENCOMPASSING ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK, WARTIME SCENARIOS, CONSCRIPTION POLICIES, FORCE LEVELS (STANDING FORCES VS MOBILIZATION FORCES), ETC.

4. THE LAST DEFENSE COMMISSION WAS CONSTITUTED IN 1946 AND COMPLETED ITS WORK IN 1948. PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI, WHO CHAIRED THAT COMMISSION, HAS REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE SERIOUSNESS AND IMPORTANCE WITH WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT REGARDS THE WORK OF THE NEW BODY. SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR EXPEDITIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES (SUBMISSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN A TWO-YEAR PERIOD) AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD NOT BECOME EMBROILED IN DETAILED, PERIPHERAL STUDIES AT THE EXPENSE OF THE CENTRAL, FAR-REACHING ISSUES.

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5. IN DISCUSSING COMMISSION WITH THE AMBASSADOR SHORTLY AFTER THE CABINET HAD APPROVED COMPOSITION AND MANDATE ON MAY 31, DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL STRESSED THAT US SHOULD NOT BE UNDULY CONCERNED ABOUT SV MEMBERSHIP. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE 1946-48 BRATTELI COMMISSION HAD INCLUDE ONE COMMUNIST AND SAID THE PRESENT SV MEMBER WILL BE MUCH LESS TROUBLESOME. (FOSTERVOLL HAD EARLIER EXPRESSED THE VIEW TO AN EMBOFF THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER TO INVOLVE THE FAR LEFT IN THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION THAN TO EXCLUDE THEM AND ALLOW THEM TO SNIPE AT RESULTS FROM OUTSIDE). WHILE MANDATE AS APPROVED BY CABINET ASSUMES COMMISSION WILL TAKE MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AS STARTING POINT FOR ITS REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, FOSTERVOLL EMPHASIZED THAT BOTH HE AND PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI FEEL STRONGLY THAT THIS ISSUE MUST BE THOROUGHLY AIRED BY COMMISSION TO SATISFY SKEPTICAL NORWEGIAN YOUTH AND TO ENSURE THAT COMMISSION'S FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL NOT COME UNDER

LEFTIST FIRE FOR FAILURE TO DISCUSS NATO MEMBERSHIP. FOSTERVOLL IS CONVINCED THAT FULL DISCUSSION BY COMMISSION WILL LEAD INEVITABLY TO UNEQUIVOCAL REAFFIRMATION OF NATO MEMBERSHIP AS CORNER-STONE OF NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY.

6. COMMENT: THE COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP APPEARS TO BE WEIGHTED WELL IN FAVOR OF NORWAY'S PRO-NATO, STRONG-DEFENSE PROPONENTS. BOTH FOSTERVOLL AND HIMLE, WHILE FULLY SUPPORTING AN OBJECTIVE, INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT, ARE CAPABLE OF EXERTING DISCREET INFLUENCE TO PREVENT THE UNLIKELY EMERGENCE OF ANY EXTREMIST VIEWS IN THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS. DISSENTING OPINIONS FROM THE TWO NATO OPPONENTS ARE, OF COURSE, A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY.

7. FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF THE TWO NATO OPPONENTS ON THE COMMISSION, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THEY WILL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE. HENRIKSEN, A RECENT DEFECTOR FROM THE LABOR PARTY ELECTED TO THE STORTING IN SEPTEMBER 1973 ON THE SV SLATE, HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING A SOMEWHAT POLITICALLY NAIVE, IMPRESSIONABLE FISHERMAN OF MODEST INTELLIGENCE. HENRIKSEN ALSO SERVES AS THE SV MEMBER ON THE STORTING DEFENSE COMMITTEE. THE OTHER LEFTIST, BJORN HALS-HOFSO, IS A YOUNG, LITTLE KNOWN BUT REPORTEDLY RADICAL JOURNALIST FOR NORDLYS, THE LABOR PARTY NEWSPAPER IN TROMSO, WHO WAS RECENTLY SINGLED OUT TO REVITALIZE THE DEFUNCT LABOR PARTY YOUTH ORGANIZATION (AUF) IN THE TROMSO AREA. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, HALS-HOFSO IS AN OUTSPOKEN INDIVIDUAL OF DECIDELY ANTI-AMERICAN OPINIONS AND A FREQUENT POLITICAL ACTIVIST IN MATTERS INVOLVING INDOCHINA AND

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8. A COMPLETE LIST OF THE DEFENSE COMMISSION'S MEMBERS AND THEIR ALTERNATES (INCLUDING SELECTED SUPPLEMENTARY BIOGRAPHIC DATA) AS WELL AS THE TEXT OF THE COMMISSION'S MANDATE FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

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